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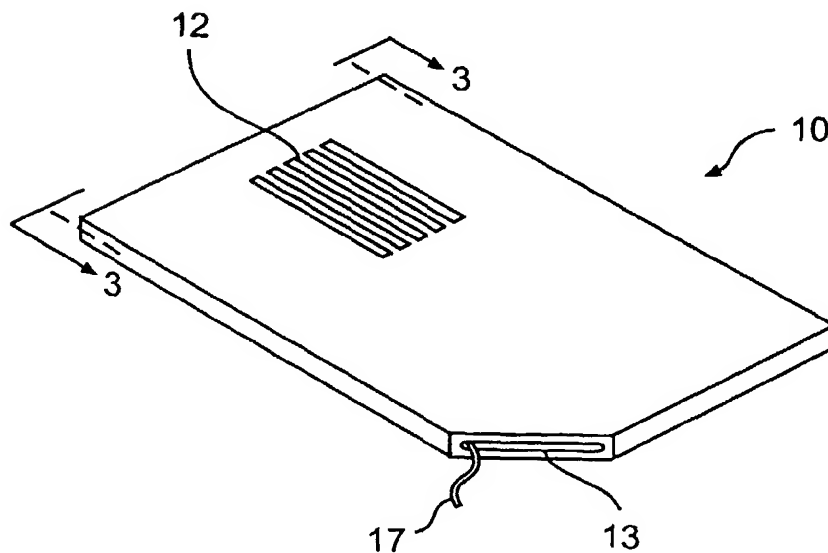
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(54) Title: INHALATION DEVICE AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: Inhaler and associated method for facilitating inhalation of dry powder medicaments by a patient. The inhaler is light and compact, allowing for convenient storage and portability by a patient. Additionally, a minimal number of steps are required by the patient to use the device from start to finish. The inhaler (10, 40) is self-contained, being provided to the patient with medicament having been pre-stored in a powder chamber (15, 65). Upon release from this chamber, an accurate dosage of the dry powder medicament is available for inhalation. the inhaler may simply be disposed of following use.



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## Inhalation Device and Method

### *Background of the Invention*

#### *Field of the Invention*

The present invention relates generally to administration of medication. More specifically, the present invention relates to the administration of medication by a method and apparatus for facilitating inhalation of dry powder medicaments.

#### *Related Art*

In the medical field, it is often desirable to administer various forms of medication to patients. Well known methods of introducing medication into the human body include the oral ingestion of capsules and tablets, intravenous injection through hypodermic needles, and numerous others. In one method, certain medications may be inhaled into a patient's respiratory tract and lungs through the nose or mouth. Certain of these medications, such as bronchodilators, corticosteroids, etc., for the treatment of asthma and other respiratory anomalies, may be aimed at the respiratory tract directly. Others are inhaled for purposes of systemic treatment, i.e. for treatment of any area of the body through absorption from the respiratory tract through the lung tissue, into the deep lungs, and into the bloodstream. Each of these medications comes in a variety of forms, including fluids, which are commonly administered as an aerosol vapor or mist, as well as solids. Inhalable solids typically take the form of fine, dry powders. Specialized devices, such as inhalers, are provided to assist the patient in directing these fine powder medications into the respiratory tract.

A variety of inhalers are known for the administration of dry powder medicaments. However, each of these inhalers suffers certain drawbacks. For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,787,881 discloses an inhaler that is used with encapsulated dry powder medicaments. However, use of this device requires numerous steps and imposes a number of inconveniences on a user. For example, the medication capsules used with the device have an aperture formed therein prior to insertion into an opening in the inhaler. Therefore, there exists a danger that an amount of medication may be lost prior to or during insertion into the device. After insertion of the capsule, use of the device requires the additional step that a cover must be closed before the medication may be inhaled. Further inconveniences

arise during periods of nonuse of the device. For example, because medication is not inserted into the device until just prior to use, the medication and the device may inadvertently become separated, and alone, each is useless. Furthermore, because the device is circular in shape, it is not as readily stored as a flatter device would be in locations such as wallet or pocket, for example.

The above inhaler and others which are known may be operated in a positive gas assisted manner, such as with a source of compressed air or other gas. These devices are inconvenient for a user in that the compressed gas source must be carried with the inhaler if medication is to be effectively administered. Also, these devices carry the additional danger that a pressurized container may become ruptured.

Propellant-free inhalers, which depend only on an inspiration by a user, are also known. One such device is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,575,280. This device houses in a storage chamber an amount of medication sufficient for administration of more than one dose. Just prior to each use, a notched wheel rotates to meter an amount of powder into a separate chamber for inhalation. However, if the medication does not properly fill such a notch, because of an air pocket, for example, an improper amount of medication may be administered following rotation of the wheel. This inaccuracy can potentially lead to ineffective treatment of an ailment, and thereby result in prolonged suffering by a patient.

Thus, there is a need in the art for an improved method and apparatus for inhalation of dry powder medicaments. What is needed is an inhaler having medication pre-stored therein, and which requires minimal steps by a user prior to use. Such a device would preferably come in a size and shape for portability and convenient storage by a user, and would be designed to avoid spillage or other events leading to inaccurate administration of medication, such that a proper dosage is administered each time such a device is used. The present invention, the description of which is fully set forth below, solves the need in the art for such improved methods and apparatus.

### ***Summary of the Invention***

The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for facilitating inhalation of dry powder medicaments. In one aspect of the invention, an apparatus for inhaling powder

is provided. The apparatus includes a casing that houses a powder chamber. The powder chamber is formed by a first wall that is coupled to the casing, and a second wall having a removable portion. At least one ventilation opening is defined in the casing to allow air to enter. The casing also includes a powder outlet opening to allow air and powder to exit  
5 from the casing.

In a further aspect of the present invention, another apparatus for inhaling powder is provided. The apparatus includes a casing having a first casing portion and a second casing portion. The casing portions are coupled such that they may slide with respect to each other. The casing contains a powder chamber, and has at least one ventilation  
10 opening to allow air to enter into the casing. The casing also includes a powder outlet opening. The powder chamber is configured such that sliding the first casing portion relative to the second casing portion causes the powder chamber to move from a closed position to an opened position. In the opened position, powder from the powder chamber can exit the device through the powder outlet opening.

In yet another aspect of the present invention, a method of dispensing powders by inhalation is provided. The method involves providing a powder inhalation device. The powder inhalation device includes a casing having a powder chamber that contains powder. A first wall that is coupled to the casing and a second wall having a removable portion define the powder chamber. At least one ventilation opening is defined in the casing to  
15 allow air to enter into the casing. The casing includes a powder outlet opening to allow powder to exit from the casing. The method further involves pulling a tether coupled to the removable portion of the second wall, thereby removing the removable portion and defining an opening in the second wall. A final aspect of the method involves inhaling the powder.  
20

In still yet another aspect of the present invention, another method of dispensing powders by inhalation is provided. The method involves providing a powder inhalation device having a casing. The casing has a first casing portion and a second casing portion, with the casing portions being slidable with respect to each other. Defined in the casing is a powder chamber containing powder. The casing also includes a powder outlet opening  
25 and at least one ventilation opening to allow air to enter into the casing. The powder chamber is configured such that sliding the first casing portion relative to the second casing  
30

portion causes the powder chamber to move from a closed position to an opened position, allowing powder to exit the powder inhalation device through the powder outlet opening. The method further involves sliding the first casing portion relative to the second casing portion, thereby moving the powder chamber to the opened position. Finally, the method  
5 involves inhaling the powder.

### *Features and Advantages*

One feature of the present invention is its compact and convenient size and shape. The dimensions of the inhaler render it ideal for storage in a pocket, or wallet or purse of a patient, with such items as identification or credit cards.

10 Another advantageous feature of the present invention is the accuracy of medicament dosage delivered thereby. Since only one dosage of medication is present in the inhaler during each use, the possibility of overdose is eliminated, and the medicament need not be metered prior to delivery. A patient may simply inhale all medicament present in the device.

15 The present invention also possesses the advantage that the medicament is stored inside the inhaler. The inhaler advantageously may be made from a material having a desiccant integral to it, or otherwise include a desiccant, to protect the medicament from moisture during storage. No capsules or other storage units need be carried other than the inhaler itself. In addition, the medicament is sealed securely inside the inhaler until only a  
20 moment prior to use, and thus the chances of spillage are greatly reduced.

Because the present invention operates only under the inhalative power of the patient, the inhaler carries the additional advantage that no accessory device, such as a compressed air cylinder or other propellant, needs to be used in conjunction with the present invention.

25 Another advantage of the present invention is that the medicament has been stored in a sealed, dry environment until just prior to administration. In addition, during inhalation, the medicament is subjected to mixing by a plurality of baffles contained in the device. These features help to ensure that the medicament exiting the inhaler and entering the patient's respiratory system is in the form of a fine dry powder, facilitating medicament

deposition in the lungs. In addition, inhalation of finer powders is typically more comfortable for the patient.

Yet another advantage of the apparatus of the present invention is that it is disposable. A patient can simply use the inhaler, and dispose of it. Other steps such as  
5 cleaning, refilling and permanently storing are unnecessary.

### ***Brief Description of the Figures***

The present invention is described with reference to the accompanying drawings. In the drawings, like reference numbers indicate identical or functionally similar elements.

**FIG. 1** is a perspective view of an embodiment of an inhalation device in  
10 accordance with the present invention;

**FIG. 2** is another perspective view of an embodiment of an inhalation device in accordance with the present invention;

**FIG. 3a** is a cross sectional view along line 3-3 of **FIG. 2** showing an internal arrangement of an inhalation device of the present invention;

**FIG. 3b** is a cross sectional view along line 3-3 of **FIG. 2** showing an alternative  
15 internal arrangement of an inhalation device of the present invention;

**FIG. 4** is another embodiment of an inhalation device in accordance with the present invention, illustrated in a preferred opened position;

**FIG. 5** is another embodiment of an inhalation device in accordance with the  
20 present invention, illustrated in a preferred closed position;

**FIG. 6** is a cross sectional view of another embodiment of an inhalation device along line 6-6 of **FIG. 5**; and

**FIG. 7** is a cross sectional view of another embodiment of an inhalation device along line 7-7 of **FIG. 4**.

## ***Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments***

### ***Overview***

The present invention provides an improved method and apparatus for dispensing dry powder medicaments for inhalation by a patient. As will be described in more detail below, an apparatus of the present invention is an inhaler having a compact and convenient shape. This inhaler contains a single dose of dry powder medicament, and may be disposed of following use by a patient. The inhaler includes features for allowing air to pass into and through the device as a patient inhales. In proper use, air will exit the inhaler carrying a full dose of medicament in the form of a fine, dry powder, with little risk of spillage. Following use, the inhaler may be disposed of.

The methods of the present invention use an inhaler to administer a single dose of dry powder medicament. As will be discussed in greater detail below, a user utilizes the method of the present invention by removing the inhaler from any protective wrapping. The fine powder medicament contained therein is released from a powder chamber and inhaled. The inhaler may then be disposed of.

### ***Inhaler and Associated Method of the Present Invention***

An exemplary embodiment of the present invention will now be described. Referring to Figure 1, an inhaler 10 of the present invention is shown. As is illustrated, the inhaler 10 is of a relatively thin, rectangular design. Preferably, the inhaler 10 is comparable in length and width to a standard credit card, and is the approximate thickness of two to three credit cards. Of course, the precise dimensions may vary in size and/or shape with a particular medication and dosage to be administered, or merely with preference. For example, a device being approximately 85 millimeters (mm) in length, 55mm in width, and 3mm thick has been contemplated. Because of the compact size and shape of the inhaler 10, the patient may readily carry the inhaler 10 in a pocket, or store it in a wallet or purse, such as with credit cards, identification cards, or similarly shaped items.

As further illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, the inhaler 10 includes a casing 11 having a powder outlet opening 13 defined therein, through which a user of the inhaler 10 inhales a powder medicament to be dispensed. Prior to a time of use, the inhaler 10 may be contained in a sealed protective enclosure, such as a plastic package or wrapper 8, as seen



in Figure 1. The inhaler 10 further includes at least one ventilation opening 12 or air inlet defined in the casing 11 to allow a stream of ambient air to enter as the user draws air from the inhaler 10 through the powder outlet opening 13. One or more additional ventilation openings (see Figure 3b) may be formed in the casing 11 in any desired position to allow  
5 one or more secondary or additional streams of air to enter the inhaler 10. Alternatively, secondary or additional air streams may be formed from a single air inlet by passageways internal to the inhaler 10. A leash or other similar structure, such as a tether 17, can be seen protruding from the powder outlet opening 13, as is illustrated in Figure 2.

Referring next to Figure 3a, an embodiment of an internal structure is revealed for  
10 the inhaler 10. As discussed above with regard to external features, the inhaler 10 of Figure 3a includes a casing 11 that has formed therein at least one ventilation opening 12 and a powder outlet opening 13. In addition, the casing 11 includes a powder chamber 15 defined by a first wall 16 coupled to the casing 11, and a second wall 18 having a removable portion. The second wall 18 is preferably formed at least partially by the tether  
15 17, which protrudes from the powder outlet opening 13. Alternatively, the tether 17 may merely be connected to, rather than itself a part of, the removable portion. The casing 11 has defined therein exit channels 19 and 21, and a nozzle 14 integrally formed in the casing 11 and in fluid communication between at least one ventilation opening 12 and the powder outlet opening 13. A plurality of baffles 20 are disposed within the exit channels 19 and  
20 21, as well as in the open space between the exit channels 19 and 21 and the powder outlet opening 13. At a time of manufacture, the casing 11 is preferably formed by two opposing portions that are to be attached together, with each of the above-described features formed as desired in one or the other of the opposing portions prior to their attachment. Alternatively, the inhaler 10 may be formed as a unitary device.

25 With reference to Figure 3b, an alternative embodiment of an internal structure of the inhaler 10 is illustrated. Like the embodiment of Figure 3a, this embodiment includes a casing 11 having at least one ventilation opening 12 and a powder outlet opening 13 defined therein. A nozzle 24 is integrally formed in the casing 11 and is in fluid communication between the at least one ventilation opening 12 and the powder outlet  
30 opening 13. In this embodiment, the inhaler 10 includes an alternative powder chamber 25 defined by a first wall 26 coupled to the casing 11. Prior to use, the powder chamber 25 will preferably be further defined by a second wall (not shown) having a removable

portion, such as a tether or other removable portion connected thereto, as discussed above. The inhaler **10** may further be provided with one or more baffles, as in the embodiment of Figure 3a. The inhaler **10** may also be provided with one or more additional ventilation openings **22**, such that a secondary stream of air enters the casing **11**.

5           The operation of an inhaler of the present invention will now be described. For convenience, the inhaler **10** of Figures 1 and 2 and the internal features of Figures 3a and 3b will be referred to. However, the following description is also applicable to other embodiments of the present invention.

10           When provided to a user, such as a patient, the inhaler **10** will preferably appear substantially as shown in Figure 2, and will have been provided with a proper dosage of medicament in powder chamber **15**. As noted, the inhaler **10** is preferably provided to a patient in a sealed protective enclosure **8**, such as a plastic package or wrapper. While not necessary, sealing the inhaler **10** in a protective wrapper may help to prevent moisture in the ambient air from reaching the dry powder medicament housed therein, reducing  
15           clumping and thereby facilitating inhalation when a dose is administered. A reusable carrying case may also be utilized with multiple inhalers over time as a patient transports multiple doses of medicament.

20           When a patient is prepared to administer a dose of medicament, the patient first removes an inhaler **10** from its carrying case and/or protective wrapper **8**. The patient then preferably holds the inhaler **10** substantially parallel to the ground and gently tugs on the tether **17** protruding from the powder outlet opening **13**. Referring again to Figure 3a, pulling on the tether **17** serves to at least partially remove the second wall **18** of the powder chamber **15**, and to release medicament stored in the powder chamber **15** from its previously sealed condition. Preferably, the tether **17** and the associated portion of the  
25           second wall **18** are completely removed from the inhaler **10** by the patient prior to inhalation.

30           The inhaler **10** is now ready for use in administering a dosage of medicament. The patient's lips are used to form an airtight seal about the powder outlet opening **13**. At this time, a relatively forceful inhalation action by the patient will draw air into the casing **11** of the inhaler **10** through at least one ventilation opening **12**. The incoming air is forced through the nozzle **14**, causing the air to accelerate as the space through which the air is

passing narrows, and aiming the air directly into the dosage of medicament previously sealed in the powder chamber 15. Preferably, the powder medicament used will consist of particles of a very fine and low-density nature. Such particles are highly susceptible to aerolization, *i.e.* they readily mix with ambient air. The stream of air through the nozzle 14 causes the fine particles of medicament to become airborne, and to begin passing through the exit channels 19 and 21 towards the powder outlet opening 13. As noted above, one or more additional ventilation openings may allow one or more secondary or additional streams of air to enter the inhaler 10. These additional streams act to further mix with the powder medicament to facilitate aerolization of the medicament particles. As the airborne medicament passes through the exit channels 19 and 21 and the space about the powder outlet opening 13, the plurality of baffles 20 acts to break up any remaining clumps of medicament. Breaking up the medicament disperses the particles thereof to a size appropriate for effective respiration into the patient's respiratory tract, and makes inhalation more comfortable for the patient.

Preferably, a full dose of medicament will be administered by a single inhalation action by a patient. However, depending on a size of the dose, a patient's lung capacity generally, and a particular inhalation specifically, further inhalations may be necessary. The inhaler 10, including, for example, casing 11, may be in part or completely formed of a translucent or transparent material, revealing to a user whether a full dosage of medicament has been properly administered. Alternatively, a patient may have to learn through experience how to best self-administer a full dosage. Preferably, inhaler 10 is then properly disposed of. In such a disposable embodiment of the present invention, inhaler 10, including, for example, casing 11, is formed from a biodegradable material. One such biodegradable material is biodegradable plastic. Other suitable biodegradable materials would be apparent to one skilled in the art. Alternatively, reusable inhalers may be used in connection with individually provided medicament packets that would be placed in the powder chamber 15 prior to use. Such medicament packets, for use in reusable and disposable inhalers alike, may be prepared for use in any of a variety of ways. For example, a tether or similar arrangement, as discussed above, may be pulled by a user to release medicament stored in the packet. Alternatively, blister packs may be used. In another embodiment, the inhaler may be adapted with a blade or other puncturing or

cutting device that may be manipulated by a patient to open a medicament packet. Further variations will be apparent to one skilled in the art.

In one embodiment of the present invention, inhaler 10, including, for example, casing 11, is formed from a material having a desiccant integral to it to protect against moisture during storage. One such material is, for example, a desiccant plastic. In an alternate embodiment of the present invention, a desiccant 100, as shown in Figures 3a, 3b, 6, and 7, is disposed in casing 11 to protect against moisture. It should be understood by one skilled in the art that the materials discussed herein for inhaler 10 are applicable to all embodiments of the invention.

Referring to Figures 4-7, an embodiment of the present invention is illustrated which does not rely on a leash or tether to release medicament from a powder chamber prior to use. With reference to Figures 4 and 5, the casing of this inhaler 40 is formed of a first casing portion 44, and a second casing portion 46 slidably coupled to the first casing portion 44. Referring to Figure 6, a second wall 68 of a powder chamber 65 is formed not from a portion of a tether as in the embodiments of Figures 3a and 3b, but from a material similar to that forming a first wall 66 of the powder chamber 65. The second wall 68 is coupled to a different casing portion than is the first wall 66, such that when the first casing portion 44 moves with respect to the second casing portion 46, the first wall 66 moves with respect to the second wall 68. Other features of this embodiment, including at least one ventilation opening 42, a powder outlet opening 43, a plurality of baffles 60, a nozzle 64 and exit channels 69 and 71, are substantially similar to and function in substantially the same manner as their analogous features described above with respect to Figures 1, 2, 3a and 3b.

When an inhaler 40 is provided to a patient, it will be in a closed position. As discussed above, the inhaler 40 will preferably be contained in a sealed protective enclosure (not shown), such as a plastic package or wrapper. Preferably, Figure 4 illustrates the opened position while Figure 5 shows the closed position. This arrangement leaves the inhaler 40 in its most compact position while it is not in use. Alternatively, Figure 4 may illustrate the closed position and Figure 5 the opened position. Such an arrangement would facilitate formation of an airtight seal about the powder outlet opening 43 by the patient, since the regions of the first casing portion 44 and the second casing

portion 46 that form the powder outlet opening 43 will be in closer proximity to each other in this position.

Referring now to Figure 6, an internal arrangement of the inhaler 40 in the closed position may be seen. With the inhaler 40 in the closed position, the second wall 68 is disposed against the first wall 66 to define powder chamber 65. With this arrangement, when the inhaler 40 is in the closed position, the powder chamber 65 will likewise be in the closed position. Again, medicament to be administered will be housed within the powder chamber 65. Figure 7 illustrates the internal arrangement of the inhaler 40 in the opened position. When the first casing portion 44 is moved with respect to the second casing portion 46 from the closed position to the opened position, the first wall 66 and second wall 68 of the powder chamber 65 separate, releasing the dry powder stored in the powder chamber 65. While the movable portion of the powder chamber 65 is here illustrated as a movable second wall 68, it should be noted that any movable portion may be used. For example, a relatively small plug may be removable from the top, bottom or sides of the powder chamber 65 upon movement of the first casing portion 44 with respect to the second casing portion 46. Additionally, the inhaler 40 may optionally be further designed such that the one or more ventilation openings 42 are open to outside air only when the inhaler 40 is in the opened position.

In the present embodiment, the closed position of the powder chamber 65 is preferably maintained merely by the pressure of the second wall 68 against the first wall 66, so long as the pressure is sufficient to prevent premature escape of the medicament housed within the powder chamber 65. The pressure results from a friction fit between the first casing portion 44 and the second casing portion 46, to which the second wall 68 and the first wall 66 are separately attached. Note that first wall 66 and the second wall 68 may each be attached to either the first casing portion 44 or the second casing portion 46, so long as the first wall 66 and the second wall 68 are attached to portions that are movable with respect to one another. Additional pressure between the first wall 66 and the second wall 68 of the powder chamber 65 may be induced if desired by in any way increasing the friction between the first casing portion 44 and the second casing portion 46, such as through the use of one or more detent portions. Alternatively, the junction between the first wall 66 and the second wall 68 may be provided with a releasable seal. This may be preferred where hermetic sealing of a medicament is a priority. However, such measures

will typically be unnecessary since, as noted above, the inhaler 40 is preferably contained in a sealed protective enclosure when it is provided to the patient.

The operation of the inhaler 40 of this embodiment of the present invention will now be described. When a patient is prepared to administer a dose of medicament, the patient first removes the inhaler 40 from its protective wrapper. This arrangement allows a patient to slide the first casing portion 44 relative to the second casing portion 46 to cause the inhaler 40, and therefore the powder chamber 65 contained therein to move from a closed position to an opened position. This is analogous in a sense to the act of tugging the exposed tether 17 as was described with reference to Figure 2, as it is this step that opens the powder chamber 65. Opening the inhaler 40 releases the medicament originally stored in the powder chamber 65. Because of the fine and low-density nature of the medicament preferably used in the inhaler 40, any reasonably forceful movement of air through the inhaler 40 will lead to aerolization of the powder released from the powder chamber 65 when the inhaler 40 is opened. The proper dosage of medicament may now be administered in accordance with the procedure described above with regard to the embodiments of Figures 1, 2, 3a and 3b.

### ***Conclusion***

While various embodiments of the present invention have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example only, and not limitation. For example, the present invention is not limited to the physical arrangements or dimensions illustrated or described. Nor is the present invention limited to any particular design or materials of construction. As such, the breadth and scope of the present invention should not be limited to any of the above-described exemplary embodiments, but should be defined only in accordance with the following claims and their equivalents.

*What is claimed is:*

1. A powder inhalation device, comprising:  
a casing;  
a powder chamber disposed in said casing defined by a first wall coupled to said casing and a second wall having a removable portion;  
at least one ventilation opening defined in said casing to allow air to enter into said casing; and  
a powder outlet opening defined in said casing to allow powder to exit from said casing.
2. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, further comprising a nozzle integrally formed in said casing in fluid communication with said at least one ventilation opening.
3. The powder inhalation device of claim 2, wherein said powder chamber is disposed adjacent said nozzle, such that said nozzle converges toward said powder chamber and is configured to direct a stream of air into said powder chamber.
4. The powder inhalation device of claim 3, wherein said second wall is opposite said nozzle.
5. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, further comprising a tether coupled to said removable portion of said second wall.
6. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, further comprising an exit channel defined by said casing, said exit channel being in fluid communication with said powder outlet opening.
7. The powder inhalation device of claim 6, further comprising a plurality of baffles disposed within said exit channel.
8. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, further comprising powder disposed within said powder chamber.
9. The powder inhalation device of claim 8, further comprising a wrapper encapsulating said casing.

10. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, wherein said device is disposable.
11. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, wherein said device is dimensioned to form a compact configuration.
12. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, wherein said casing comprises:
  - a first casing portion; and
  - a second casing portion slidably coupled to said first casing portion.
13. The powder inhalation device of claim 12, wherein said powder chamber is configured such that sliding said first casing portion relative to said second casing portion causes said powder chamber to move from a closed position to an open position, thereby allowing powder to exit the device through said powder outlet opening.
14. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said casing is formed from a translucent material.
15. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of said casing is formed from a transparent material.
16. A powder inhalation device, comprising:
  - a casing, said casing having a first casing portion and a second casing portion slidably coupled to said first casing portion;
  - a powder chamber disposed in said casing;
  - at least one ventilation opening defined in said casing to allow air to enter into said casing;
  - a powder outlet opening defined in said casing, wherein said powder chamber is configured such that sliding said first casing portion relative to said second casing portion causes said powder chamber to move from a closed position to an opened position, thereby allowing powder to exit the device through said powder outlet opening.
17. The powder inhalation device of claim 16, further comprising:
  - a nozzle integrally formed in said casing opposite said powder outlet opening and in fluid communication with said at least one ventilation opening, said nozzle converging toward said powder chamber and configured to direct a stream of air into said powder chamber.

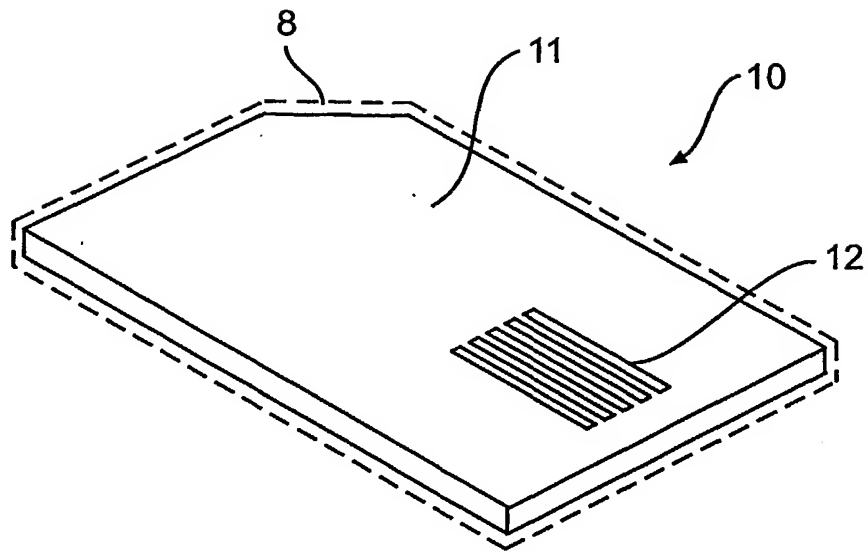


18. The powder inhalation device of claim 17, further comprising:  
an exit channel defined by said casing, said exit channel being in fluid communication with said powder outlet opening.
19. The powder inhalation device of claim 18, further comprising a plurality of baffles disposed within said exit channel.
20. The powder inhalation device of claim 16, further comprising powder disposed within said powder chamber.
21. The powder inhalation device of claim 20, further comprising a wrapper encapsulating said casing.
22. The powder inhalation device of claim 16, wherein at least a portion of said casing is formed from a translucent material.
23. The powder inhalation device of claim 16, wherein at least a portion of said casing is formed from a transparent material.
24. A method for dispensing powder by inhalation, comprising:  
providing a powder inhalation device, the device comprising  
a casing,  
a powder chamber disposed in said casing defined by a first wall coupled to said casing and a second wall having a removable portion,  
at least one ventilation opening defined in said casing to allow air to enter into said casing,  
a powder outlet opening defined in said casing to allow powder to exit from said casing, and  
powder disposed within said powder chamber;  
pulling a tether coupled to said removable portion of said second wall, thereby removing said removable portion and defining an opening in said second wall; and  
inhaling the powder.
25. The method of claim 24, further comprising:  
removing a protective wrapper from said device.

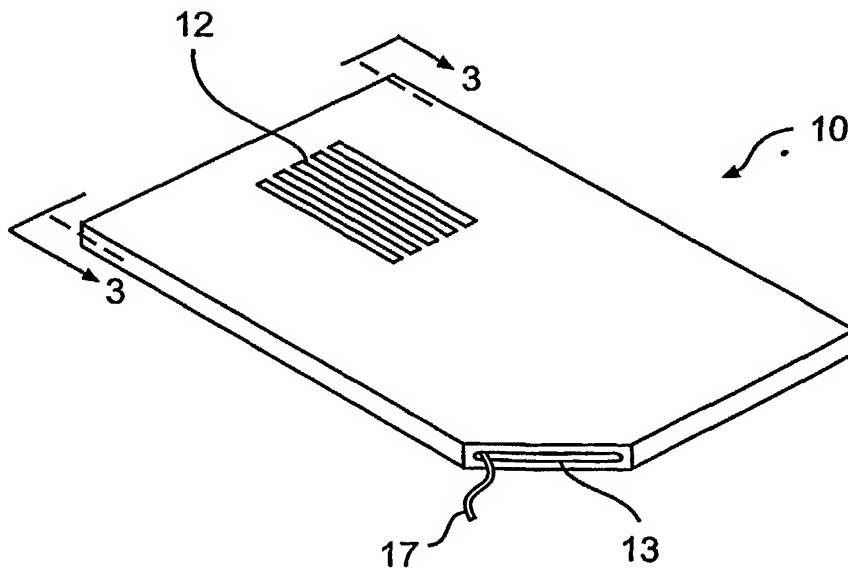
26. A method for dispensing powder by inhalation, comprising:  
providing a powder inhalation device, the device comprising  
a casing, said casing having a first casing portion and a second casing portion slidably coupled to said first casing portion,  
a powder chamber disposed in said casing,  
at least one ventilation opening defined in said casing to allow air to enter into said casing,  
a powder outlet opening defined in said casing, wherein said powder chamber is configured such that sliding said first casing portion relative to said second casing portion causes said powder chamber to move from a closed position to an opened position, thereby allowing powder to exit the device through said powder outlet opening, and  
powder disposed within said powder chamber;  
sliding said first casing portion relative to said second casing portion, thereby moving said powder chamber to the open position; and  
inhaling the powder.
27. The method of claim 26, further comprising:  
removing a protective wrapper from said device.
28. The method of claim 26, further comprising:  
providing the powder to the powder chamber.
29. The method of claim 28, wherein said providing includes inserting a powder packet into the powder chamber.
30. The powder inhalation device of claim 3, further comprising:  
at least one secondary opening defined in said casing, wherein a secondary stream of air enters said casing through said secondary opening.
31. The powder inhalation device of claim 17, further comprising:  
at least one secondary opening defined in said casing, wherein a secondary stream of air enters said casing through said secondary opening.

32. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, wherein said casing is formed from a biodegradable material.
33. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, wherein said casing is formed from a material having an integral desiccant.
34. The powder inhalation device of claim 1, further comprising:  
a desiccant disposed in said casing.
35. The powder inhalation device of claim 16, wherein said casing is formed from a biodegradable material.
36. The powder inhalation device of claim 16, wherein said casing is formed from a material having an integral desiccant.
37. The powder inhalation device of claim 16, further comprising:  
a desiccant disposed in said casing.

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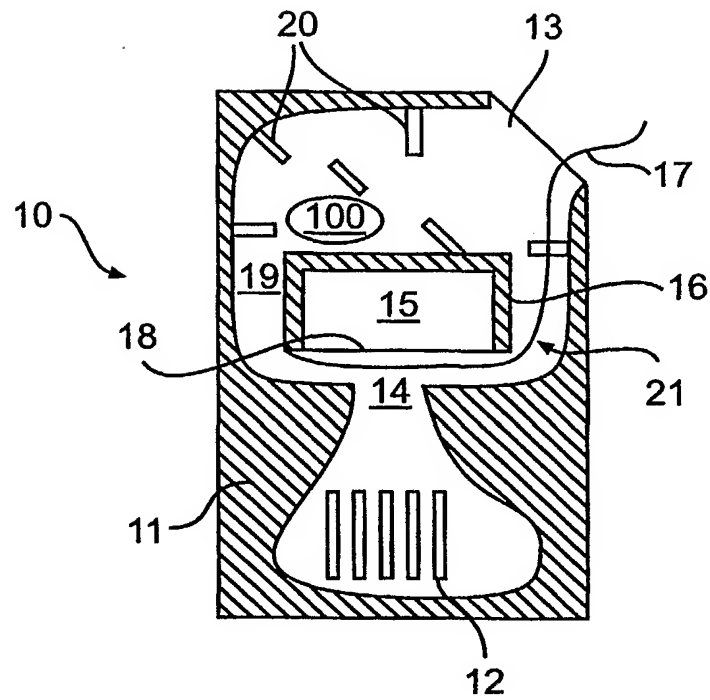


**FIG. 1**

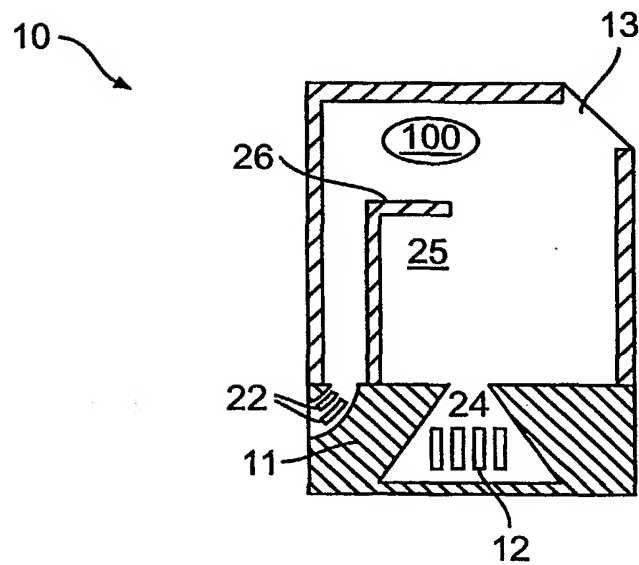


**FIG. 2**

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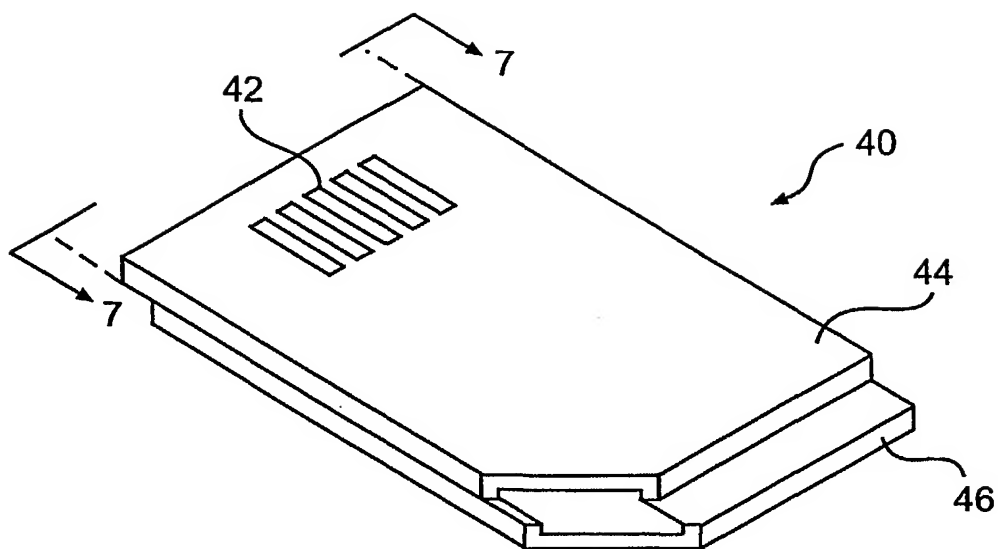


**FIG. 3a**

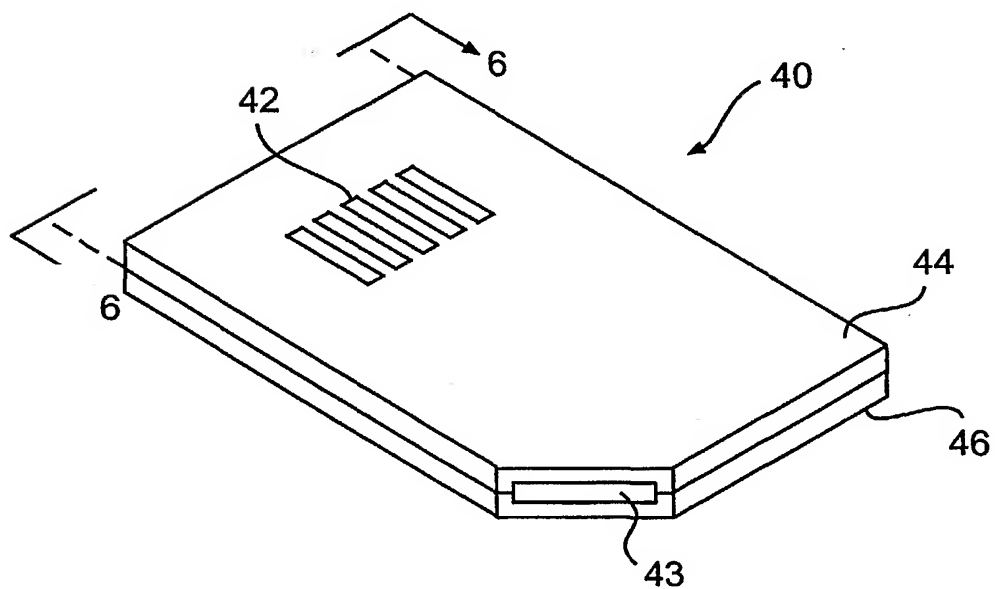


**FIG. 3b**

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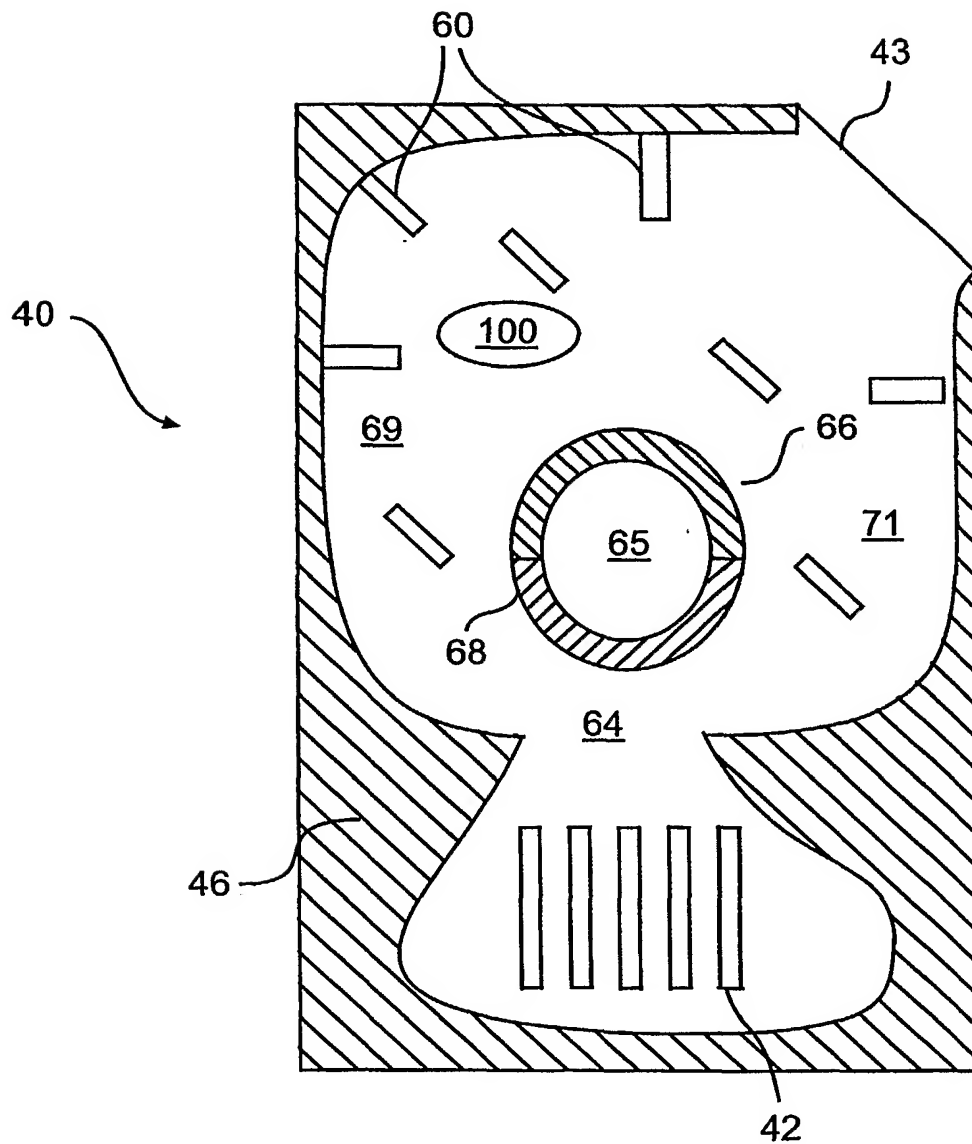


**FIG. 4**



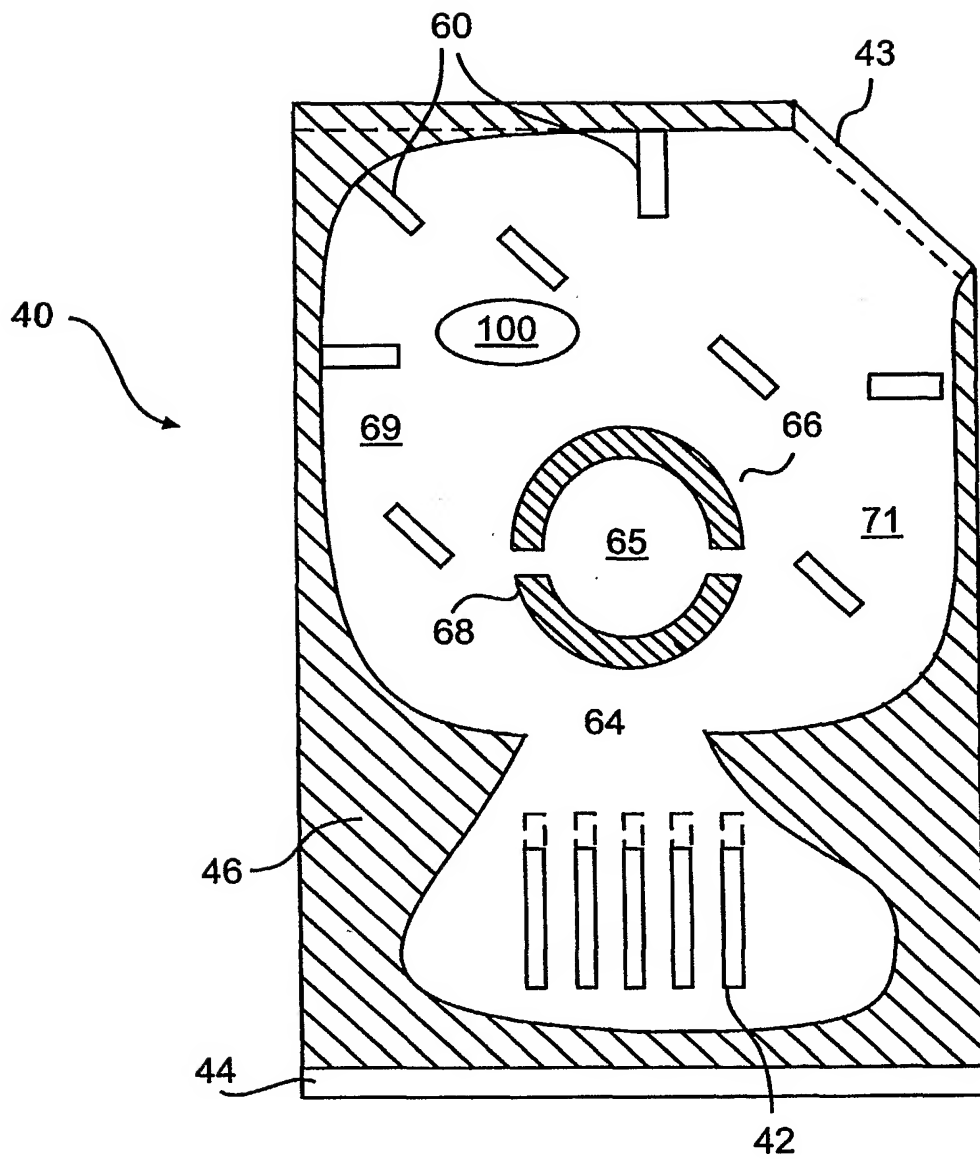
**FIG. 5**

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**FIG. 6**

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**FIG. 7**